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William Elliot to John Kean, June 9, 1790

William Elliot

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Recommended Citation

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Savannah June 9th 1790.

My Dear Sir,

So much time has elapsed, since I received your favor last Fall by Mr. Wilcox, that you might reasonably conclude I meant ~~to~~ write you a line at all, notwithstanding which, I can assure you it has been frequently my wish to write, and in spite of my laziness you would have heard from me long ago, but for two reasons - The one, that I could not think of putting Pen to paper to you, without giving you such information of the Situation of your affairs on Paris's Island, as from my promise you had a right to expect. The other, because it has not been in my power to give you that information, when in the way of an opportunity of transmitting it to you - This ~~had been~~ ^{was} owing to my being prevented the latter part of the Fall & beginning of Winter by indisposition, from paying attention to my own plantations even - and during the remainder of the Winter, and the two first Spring Months, my time was so much taken up between Charleston and Georgia, that I was not in that time to the best of my recollection more than twice on Paris's Island - I hope however for the future

at least as long as the busy season lasts, to have it in my power to be at your place once a week, and to let you know how they go on -

On Friday last / say the fourth inst. / I ~~was~~ at Paris; and walked thro your fields - I wish I could with propriety tell you that your crop were a flattering aspect; but that you may form a tolerable opinion of it yourself, I will endeavour to give some particulars, which may be more satisfactory - Sam was rather late in getting his new ground buried, which prevented his starting with the earliest Planters he however began planting early in April the highest of the n. ground - this first planting from the goodness of the soil would have been as forward as most Indies had not the crickets destroyed a great proportion of it which was obliged to be replanted, so that at present it is very irregular the old Indigo being a foot high & the supply only two inches - this had been hoed out once, and did not promise to be very grassy - his second planting was twelve acres of the old field, this Indigo was from six to eight inches high, very regular pretty, and clean - having just been hoed - the younger Indigo from two leaves to three and four inches high was so much covered with young shrubs and grass that it was impossible to form any just opinion of it - Sam was hoeing it, & told me that the Negroes went thro their tasks - your Corn field looked promising, the

it has had latterly too much rain, which may injure it in a small degree - The low piece of land which runs thro your N. ground on the right of the road, and which was intended for corn, was laid so deep in water, that Sam thought it best to take in a new piece of ground for corn, which he accordingly did, adjoining the Potatoe Patch, in front of the Negro House. This new field contained nine acres, & the corn looked tolerably well being about a foot high - your old corn was from five to six feet high, & had been planted thro with Peas, which were up - your Potatoes looked very well, being tolerably clean & running

Upon the whole, as far as can be judged from its present appearance, your crop is of the middling sort, not so bad, but if kept clear, and the seasons good, it may improve to be as we could wish -

Our seasons this Spring have inclined too much to extremes - We had good rains about the beginning and middle of April, after which we had not a shower untill the last week in May - Our Provision crop stood the dry weather extremely well, being generally very promising and forward, a great proportion of our corn being in Tassel, and the Potatoe slips fit for planting out - The Indigo however generally suffered, having no moisture to push it forward, it remained longer than usual in its tender state exposed to its numerous enemies, in many

places, the crickets grasshoppers and small bugs injured the early Indigo very much, and we could not supply until the last of May for want of Rain - it now came in as usual after drouth, in heavy Showers, accompanied with uncommon quantities of Hail. Thunder lightning. The Hail has done considerable injury to many plantations, ~~your~~ was among the number, but not of the worst. We have had our full proportion of Thunder lightning in Beaufort, particularly in the last week, on Wednesday afternoon a tree about fifty yards in front of Dr. Lathbets House was struck, and the afternoon following the Church Steeple was shattered to pieces by a stroke of lightning, but without injuring materially the Body of the Church - The Rains have been rather too heavy and too quick in succession for the flat lands, but we have been now nearly a week without any, which is much in our favor - Sam told me that a little of his youngest Indigo had been drowned and supplied and that there were nine tasks of the lowest of the Indigo land that were too wet to plant - and that he had a sufficiency without them -

I left Beaufort two days ago, your Friends there are as well as usual - My Uncle Robert had just returned from the State Convention at Columbia - they have revised the Constitution, and made some alterations. The most material are, reducing the representation one half & fixing the Seat of Government at Columbia, the same to be movable by two thirds of both branches of the Legislature

The judiciary is to be regulated by law, at the pleasure of the Legislature. The Constitution itself is alterable by the Legislature under certain restrictions - Our Parish is divided, & Hiltonhead annexed to the main, forms the Parish of St. Luke's. We are to send one Senator & three Representatives, each, to the Legislature - I have given you these heads, as the conveyance being ~~direct~~ they may possibly be acceptable -

It gave me very sensible pleasure to hear that your health has improved much since you left us. I hope it will continue to do so, and that M.^{rs} Kear and your son may enjoy a full portion of that inestimable blessing - M.^{rs} Elliott unites with me very sincerely in these sentiments - her health is in a much better state than when you left us, and she has passed near two months of this Spring in Georgia. William desires to be remembered to Master Peter, he has now a pretty good use of his tongue, and still bears his golden locks -

Believe me to be

Yours Sincerely

M.^{rs} Elliott

John Kear Esq.

W. Elliott
June 9th 1790

John Swan Esq.

New York

Joseph Clay jun^r Esq.